

Moving From Potential to Results

A message from our president,
Paul H. Elliott, Ph.D.



Growth

Exemplary Performance, LLC continues to experience growth in multiple ways. First, we have had a new person join our team – Chris Hartman. He will work with our business systems to allow us to grow seamlessly as we add clients and projects.

Second, we are broadening the industries in which we are engaged. We have recently added clients in the technology manufacturing sector and pharmaceuticals. This has been a central part of our strategy for 2006 – more work across more industry segments.

Third, we are increasing the number of concurrent projects we have underway. Currently we have over ten active projects supported by both employees and Exemplary Performance Consultants [EPCs].

Finally, we are providing a broader range of services as we penetrate deeper and wider into our existing client base. Current projects include:

- Performance analysis
- Performance improvement strategy
- Business process management
- Knowledge center design
- Instructional design and development
- Structured on-the-job training
- And others.

It is an exciting time for us here! We truly enjoy serving our clients **by enabling Exemplary Performance!!!!**

Regards,

Paul H. Elliott, Ph.D.
President

EP kicks off the Summer with new full time staff!

Christian H. Hartman Jr.

Business Systems Administrator

Effective May 22, 2006, Christian H. Hartman Jr. joined the Exemplary Performance team at the headquarters in Annapolis, Maryland. He joins EP after graduating from Frostburg State University with a Bachelor's in Business Administration. Christian has been working as an intern since August 24th of last year so he is very familiar with the company, our EPCs, and our clients.

Christian will be initially focused on integrating BigTime and QuickBooks together in order to provide more efficient financial management for the company. He will also be taking care of EP's Sharepoint site with updates and maintenance as well as assisting the IT department with various other projects.

EP holds first annual workshop for EPCs and employees

ISPI Conference

Dallas, Texas

On April 8, 2006, Exemplary Performance held their first workshop for their EPCs and employees in Dallas, Texas prior to the 44th Annual ISPI (International Society for Performance Improvement) Conference. The workshop was held to share with the team the current status of the company with ongoing projects, future projects, as well as to share strides the company is making in order to improve efficient business relationships among their own. Future development of new products and services from the company were also shared at the workshop. We plan on holding workshops like this once a year in order to ensure all who work with Exemplary Performance are kept up to speed with one another and to continue keeping healthy communications and relationships among EP's growing team.

Performance DNA Desktop by Outcome Systems

Performance DNA Desktop has had a very successful start since it's release in June of 2005. Changes have included a new pricing model for a price of \$595.00 with even lower offerings of the software when taken along with workshops by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) to help tutor users with the program. Outcome Systems, EP, and ASTD, have partnered to distribute Performance DNA Desktop to an ever growing group of clients. The support team has been very busy answering questions and assisting customers with the analysis process which continues to reduce analysis time by 20-50%! High praises of the program as well as constructive feedback for future versions come in at a continuous flow.



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"Blink..." and "Blink Again..."

Two articles by Matt Holcomb

Too much information is costly. What if your greatest organizational asset – your workforce – had correct information and the right amount of information at their disposal? What type of organizational effectiveness or competitive advantage would that mean for the key roles in your company?

What if you could capture, share and leverage what your best people produce on the job – even in the most challenging, time-sensitive or seemingly intuitive-only activities – with others for the organization's benefit?

"Blink" is a new and very popular book about rapid cognition, about the kind of thinking that happens in a blink of an eye. What we process, how we process it, and how fast we process it, tell us a lot. And this enables us to accomplish a lot as well. As the author Malcolm Gladwell describes the thrust of the book,

"When you meet someone for the first time, or walk into a house you are thinking of buying, or read the first few sentences of a book, your mind takes about two seconds to jump to a series of conclusions. Well, "Blink" is a book about those two seconds, because I think those instant conclusions that we reach are really powerful and really important and, occasionally, really good."

Gladwell continues,

"...our snap judgments and first impressions can be educated and controlled ... [and] the task of making sense of ourselves and our behavior requires that we acknowledge there can be as much value in the blink of an eye as in months of rational analysis."

Blink has powerful lessons for executives and managers. Organizations that capture and leverage those critical aspects that occur in the blink of an eye gain advantage. We extract two in particular as it relates to businesses and organizational issues:

1. The transfer of rapid cognition among the workforce, and
2. Navigating through the information glut for organizational effectiveness

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EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE

EP News

- **June 2006** - Christian H. Hartman Jr. joins EP
- **May 2006** - Dr. Paul Elliott spoke at the Seattle Chapter of ISPI on May 3.
- **April 2006** - Exemplary Performance, LLC holds its first annual workshop for EPCs and employees.

*For more information on news and announcements, go to
www.exemplaryperformance.com/news*

In "*Blink...*" we describe how too much information stands in the way of organizational effectiveness and business results, and what to do about it. We also discuss a concept Gladwell calls 'thin-slicing' and how it can be a tool for organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage. That is more focused on in "*Blink Again...*" removing the mysteries of exemplary performance and an applicable approach to for organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage.

"Blink – Blink's Approach For Filtering In The Right Information"

Too Much Information

There is simply too much information. No kidding, right? Everyone knows this of course, but what's missing is a rational and business-relevant approach to get the right information for people to utilize in a way that is aligned with the outputs of value they produce.

Gladwell suggests a definition of "too much info" and offers an example using a hospital in Chicago:

"We live in a society dedicated to the idea that we're always better off gathering as much information and spending as much time as possible in deliberation. As children, this lesson is drummed into us again and again: haste makes waste, look before you leap, stop and think. But I don't think this is true. There are lots of situations--particularly at times of high pressure and stress--when haste does not make waste, when our snap judgments and first impressions offer a much better means of making sense of the world."

Gladwell continues, using a Chicago hospital as an example

One of the stories I tell in "Blink" is about the Emergency Room doctors at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. That's the big public hospital in Chicago, and a few years ago they changed the way they diagnosed heart attacks. They instructed their doctors to gather less information on their patients: they encouraged them to zero in on just a few critical pieces of information about patients suffering from chest pain--like blood pressure and the ECG--while ignoring everything else, like the patient's age and weight and medical history. And what happened? Cook County is now one of the best places in the United States at diagnosing chest pain."

The Chicago hospital example demonstrates how too much information works to the detriment of an organizational objective – the health of its patients. And this example allows Gladwell to introduce and explain the concept of "**thin-slicing**":

Not surprisingly, it was really hard to convince the physicians at Cook County to go along with the plan, because, like all of us, they were committed to the idea that more information is always better. But I describe lots of cases in "Blink" where that simply isn't true. There's a wonderful phrase in psychology--"the power of thin slicing"--which says that as human beings we are capable of making sense of situations based on the thinnest slice of experience. I have an entire chapter in "Blink" on how unbelievably powerful our thin-slicing skills are. I have to say that I still find some of the examples in that chapter hard to believe."

Imagine that – using less information to be more accurate in one's work, and in that case – for the very health of a human being. It makes absolute sense, yet this is not how many organizations operate – pun intended. Although we must be careful to not rely on rapid cognition in every instance – careful deliberation is vital in some instances – even in jobs or situations where life and death is involved, **knowing what information is essential for the task at hand is the critical decision, in relation to the desired outcome.**

To finish this first article, "[Blink - Blink's Approach For Filtering In The Right Information](#)" you can find it in its entirety at www.exemplaryperformance.com/resources

"Blink Again - 'Thin Slicing' for Improved Organizational Results"

Thin-Slicing

What is thin-slicing? One description is people reacting to the barest of new information and arriving at smart decisions that others with more information couldn't make. Another is our ability to make accurate judgments about people or events in a very short time frame. Each of us naturally and intuitively thin-slices. We usually thin-slice before we know that we actually did it. However, there typically are a few people better than most of us at thin-slicing. When it comes to people in key job roles making critical decisions, there is a lot to be gained or lost.

Of course, not all decisions without lengthy consideration are good. Clearly, an order of balance is needed between accurate, rapid judgments, and thoroughly considered analysis for decision-making. However, we are all quite good at collecting information and analyzing a lot of it, but we are not so good, collectively, at uncovering and codifying those aspects that constitute thin-slicing. We can learn how to thin-slice and do so in a way that makes it more likely the snap decisions we regularly make will be the right ones. Our work with organizations applies a methodology that aids the majority of people who are not as skilled as the few who thin-slice.

What can thin-slicing enable? Essentially, it enables the majority to benefit from a few people that are quite good at thin-slicing. In a sales role, it could mean that a star sales performer explains to his or her peers why certain calls are made to prospects, when and in what order they are made, and what steps and sub-steps are taken with each prospect. That could mean more sales per sales person, faster time-to-first sale, etc.

For call center representatives, it could mean better interpretation of customer calls and better resolutions or more products sold through the call center.

Remove the Mysteries To What Makes Your Star Performers Great

"You just can't teach some things". If you've seen Michael Jordan in action, that is pretty difficult anecdotal evidence to contradict. However, Michael Jordan's capabilities can simplistically be broken down into the physical and the mental. The physical arena—manifested by amazing jumps, dunks and maneuvers – we won't address that, if for no other reason there is no way to describe Jordan's athleticism. While Jordan is blessed with quickness, jumping ability, and natural height to help him excel, his biggest strength was his mental game. And this is the point where we can focus for organizations – it's that other part, the mental component. There are ways to dissect what decisions he makes, how he makes them and how minute criteria formulate a simple act such as a bounce pass to a teammate. The point then, is that most (we cannot yet claim all) of the aspects that make your star people the best are indeed captureable and transferable to others. Even the most rapid and internal decision-making aspects. Sound suspicious?

How many times have you heard or thought yourself, "That person just has the unteachable qualities – they're the best (insert salesperson, athlete, assembly line worker, etc.). You can't replicate what they know. You just need to know some things."

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Upcoming Conferences

ISPI:

- **Instructional Systems
2006 Fall Symposium
Orlando, Florida
September 14-16, 2006
www.ispi.org**

ASTD:

- **Analyzing Human Performance
Atlanta, Georgia
June 5-7, 2006**
- **E-Learning Instructional Design Certificate
Minneapolis, Minnesota
June 6-7, 2006**

- **ROI Skill-Building Workshop
Alexandria, Virginia
June 12-13, 2006
www.astd.org**

Well, that's not true. Let's look briefly first at the disease cystic fibrosis and then discuss its connection to organizations of any other stripe. Why is it that there is a Cystic Fibrosis facility in Minnesota – whose doctors follow the same exact national directives and guidelines as every one of the 31 other facilities – but yet the patients survivability exceeds other centers by 10-15 years? How is this accomplished? The answers are seen in the daily interactions between doctor and each patient. It seems that a few more questions asked, a few questions asked differently in tone, different questions altogether – accounting for simply a few minutes more per patient with cystic fibrosis than nationally – is the difference over time between a geriatric patient and one who dies in their 30's or 40's.

Obviously, not all organizations deal with human life as a Cystic Fibrosis Center does. The takeaway is that there are a few things that people do – whether it is in 2 seconds, 4 questions or 1 tweak on a manufacturing assembly line – that often constitute the difference between success or not. An assumption that some things of a job are not transferable is costly for organizations in terms of what the company can achieve and what competitors are already doing about it. It's one difference between what organizations are doing to maximize the potential of an organization's greatest asset – its human capital.

To finish this second article, "*Blink Again - 'Thin Slicing' for Improved Organizational Results*" you can find it in its entirety at www.exemplaryperformance.com/resources



Matt Holcomb, President of Holcomb Performance, LLC, is a partner of Exemplary Performance, LLC. Holcomb Performance, LLC is a human capital and organizational performance consultancy. Matt has helped EP conduct front-end analysis of multiple key roles for global Fortune 500 software and service providers.

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